

**Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada
Media Clips**



**Résolution des questions des pensionnats indiens
Canada
Manchettes**

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NRSSS Press Release "Legal or Moral Fees?"

FOR: NATIONAL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS' SOCIETY

SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO--(CCNMatthews - Jan. 24, 2007) - As Survivors it is very distressing to hear that the legal issues may hold up the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement payment. In light of these findings it is somewhat disappointing and a hard pill to swallow that lawyers are willing to seize the centre of attention and delay the acknowledgement and payment for those who have waited their whole lives for this recognition. These issues enlighten us to the affects of colonial rule and the impositions which came from colonialism.

Understandably, the legal issues are a large part of this Agreement, although there are many people who have put forth an exuberant amount of effort towards this deal, without any acclaim and million dollar pay offs. The quarrel that Merchant Law Group has with the government should be no more than a shadow of the Agreement. The spirit and intent of this deal is being sullied by those that have had no harmful affects of this terrible legacy.

The Survivors and former students of Indian Residential School should be the principal focus. The Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement was created to acknowledge and attempt to repair the damage caused by the IRS Legacy. The payment to the lawyers should be an ancillary payment set aside from the rest of the deal.

Tony Merchant went on record to state, "If weren't for us, not just our firm, but other lawyers, no First Nations would be getting a dime." To take it that much further, if it were not for the racist agenda of Indian Residential Schools we would not be in this mess today. The lawyers are not our saviors, they are the legal interpreters for this process, which is an extension of the imposition of culture and colonialism that injured, failed and insulted all First Nations, Inuit and Metis of this country. No one person from the Consortium of Lawyers, the Churches nor the Government should be taking credit for any part of this deal.

To stall the settlement is shameful and disheartening considering where we are coming from, where we are at and where we plan to be in the future with reconciliation. This behavior is nothing short of disgraceful, tasteless and without class. It is not enough that the lawyers will only get richer, but Survivors and former students of the IRS will be left to clean up the crumbs. The delay in the settlement as a result of the feud over legal fees is a delay in the long awaited acknowledgement to all remaining Survivors and is an ensuing delay to the relief of the pains caused by this tragic Legacy.

Sincerely,

Ted Quwezance, Executive Director
National Residential School Survivors' Society

National Post "Victims lament death of Ontario priest convicted of sexual abuse: 'It's a shame he didn't have to serve more time'"

[Trevor Wilhelm, CanWest News Service](#)

WINDSOR - Victims of a notorious pedophile priest were sorry to learn that Charles Sylvestre died on Monday, only months into his three-year prison sentence for abusing 47 girls.

Sylvestre, 84, who abused children for nearly four decades under the noses of parents, teachers and church officials, spent the last three days of his life under guard at Kingston Penitentiary's prison hospital.

He died on Monday just before midnight after questioning earlier in the day from several lawyers involved in the dozens of lawsuits filed by victims.

Carol Ann Mieras, one of his victims, was there with her lawyer. She said she regrets she won't have the chance to hear Sylvestre tell about others, including teachers and church authorities, who knew of his abuse and did nothing.

"What saddens me most is a lot of answers have died with him," she said. "We'll likely never know for sure, now. I was at the prison and I anticipated he wouldn't live through the day. He didn't look well at all. He looked very grey and was non-responsive. His breathing was very laboured. He coughed at one point and had that rattle in his chest like the Grim Reaper is standing on top of you. I think it's a shame he didn't have to serve more time."

Sylvestre's sentence began on Oct. 6 after he was taken from a Chatham courtroom in handcuffs to the cheers of victims and their families.

Diane Russon, spokeswoman for the Correctional Service of Canada, said Sylvestre was sent to Kingston's Millhaven Penitentiary for the customary 100-day assessment.

After that, he was destined for the Bath Institution near Kingston to serve the rest of his sentence, but he never made it.

Ms. Russon said he was taken straight from Millhaven to Kingston Penitentiary's hospital. He died of natural causes, she said, but protocol requires a coroner's inquest because he died in custody.

Sylvestre had been suffering from a range of illnesses including some mental instability, which became a factor during his trial. Sylvestre's lawyer sought to have him found mentally unfit.

When he was eventually sentenced, Sylvestre's health and life expectancy were considered.

The London diocese faces 41 lawsuits from victims.

Lawyers for Sylvestre, the victims, the diocese, nuns and others were at the prison on Monday to question him for the examination-for-discovery stage of the civil suits. Barb Legate, lawyer for 28 of the victims, said in a news release that Sylvestre's death doesn't affect the lawsuits.

The claims will be amended to name his estate instead of him individually, she said. "The most significant impact on the action is that the victims will not have the benefit of Sylvestre's testimony about the many other people who knew about the abuse, but did nothing to protect his young victims," she said. "Evidence is mounting that a large number of institutions, religious, educational and protective, were aware of his proclivities before children were hurt."

Right until the end, Sylvestre blamed others for his crimes. Last week, Chatham-Kent Crown attorney Paul Bailey said he visited Sylvestre in prison. He said Sylvestre told him the girls planned the abuse and would come to see him with their skirts "up to their crotch."

Mr. Bailey said Sylvestre also blamed a principal for not keeping the girls away from him in the schoolyard, as well as Bishop Ronald Fabbro for lifting a gag order on Irene Deschenes, one of the first of his victims to make her story public.

Mr. Bailey said a victim and witness assistance team immediately set to work informing victims of Sylvestre's death and helping them cope with the emotional issue. Victim Lou Ann Soontiens said she had a "love-hate relationship" with Sylvestre, the only person who paid her any attention as a child.

The Hill Times (22 Jan 07) "Civil Circles: Deputy Minister shuffle"

CIVIL CIRCLES
By Simon Doyle

Prime Minister **Stephen Harper** (Calgary Southwest, Alta.) last week announced changes in the senior ranks of the Indian Affairs and Veterans Affairs departments.

Suzanne Tining, Associate DM at the Indian Affairs Department and executive director and deputy head of the Office of Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada, was promoted to Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs. She is to succeed **Jack Stagg**, who died last August after a struggle with cancer.

Peter Harrison, now executive director of the Public Appointments Commission Secretariat, has been appointed to Ms. Tining's position, taking the title of Senior Associate DM at the Department of Indian Affairs as well as executive director and deputy head of the Office of Indian Residential Schools Resolution. Both appointments become effective on Jan. 22.

In a PMO release, Mr. Harper paid tribute to Mr. Stagg's contributions to the public service during a 30-year career. "A highly-regarded and trusted leader, Mr. Stagg served Canadians with great skill, dedication and enthusiasm. His presence has been, and will continue to be, sorely missed by leaders at all levels of the public service," the release said.

The PM went on to thank **Verna Bruce**, Associate DM of Veterans Affairs, "for her sound and steady leadership of the department of Veterans Affairs while the position of Deputy Minister has been vacant."

Ms. Tining has a degree in business administration from the Université du Québec. In addition to serving as Associate DM at the Indian Affairs Department, in 2003 and 2004 Ms. Tining was a visiting executive at the EnCana Corporation through a private-public sector executive exchange. From 1999 to 2003 she was ADM of planning and research for Communications Canada and ADM of operations for Canada Economic Development. Prior to that, she served in senior roles at the Privy Council Office.

Mr. Harrison has a PhD in geography from the University of Washington, and between 2003 and 2006, served as a senior research fellow at the Department of Industry and the National Research Council. Between 2002 and 2003 he was DM for Natural Resources and prior to that served as associate DM for Human Resources Development and as vice-chair of the Canada Employment Insurance Commission. In the early 1990s he was ADM of human resources at Revenue Canada.